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AGNI, SUN, SACRIFICE, AND VĀC: A SACERDOTAL ODE BY DIRGHATAMAS (RIG VEDA 1.164)

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TRANSLATORS AND COMMENTATORS who have dealt with the *asyā vāmasya* hymn (Rig Veda 1.164) have generally characterized it as difficult, or obscure, or a series of riddles loosely connected or disconnected, or in other terms expressed a greater or less degree of frustration. It may be presumptuous to offer another treatment of it but the excuse is that, even if the total conception of the hymn presented here should not be accepted, there may at least be some difficulties which the study clarifies and to that extent the understanding of the hymn may be advanced.

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER TREATED IN THE HYMN

The hymn has three great themes, which are Agni, the Sun, and the Sacrifice, all closely interconnected, while the treatment of them is augmented by statements about Vāc as the Absolute. The Sun is necessary for the continued operation, even the original existence itself, of the original cosmos, and in creating and regulating time it determines the all-important sacrificial year. The Sun was brought into being by means of the Sacrifice and is reborn every morning by renewed celebration of the Sacrifice. Agni, "the firstborn of

the *ṛtā*" (*prathamajā ṛtāsyā*), learned the sacrificial ritual from Vāc, taught it to the first sacrificers, and teaches it to worthy priests today. Behind and over the cosmos and the Sacrifice is Vāc. She is the One Real (neut.). From her emanated the unorganized material of the universe and the sacrificial ritual needed to organize it, which Agni learned. Vāc, having been partitioned, is known in all four of her parts to immortals. To mortals only one fourth is known as various Vedic deities. The Vedic *ṛṣi* Dirghatamas, named as author of the hymn, learned all this in mystic vision.

METHOD OF STUDYING THE HYMN

In working with the hymn certain ideas about it have seemed pertinent in interpreting it and these constitute the method of treatment in this paper. They are the following.

First, the hymn does not seem so much a series of riddles as a highly figurative and allusive presentation of ideas, which the author (or possibly authors; see below under "Structure of the Hymn") expected the well-informed priesthood of the time to comprehend easily and admire. The only obvious ritualistic riddle (*brahmodya*) of the usual type is found in stanzas 34, 35, while two other stanzas (16, 48) use a riddle-like form of statement. In some other stanzas there are questions about major mysteries which the author presents as subjects of inquiry. Most of the puzzles that post-Vedic Indian commentators, modern Indian scholars, and Western scholars have found baffling would probably have been understood by them with relative ease if they had been familiar with all the intricacies of the Vedic ritual contemporary with the hymn, the full intellectual equipment of the well-educated priesthood, the current mythology and doctrine, and the familiar—perhaps in many cases cliché—expressions, figures of speech, intellectual assumptions, and hieratic idiosyncrasies

* During the academic year 1965-66 my Vedic Seminar worked with me on the well-known Rigvedic hymn 1.164 (*asyā vāmasya*). The membership of the Seminar besides myself was: my colleague Professor Royal W. Weiler, Dr. Noriko Mayeda, who is a recent Ph. D. of the University of Pennsylvania, and the following graduate students: Robert P. Goldman, Koji Kamioka, Stephan H. Levitt, Barbara Stoler Miller, Ralph Morgan Morrison, and Sakari Yamnadda. The paper presented here owes much to every member of the Seminar. W. N. B.

Some abbreviations used in this paper are: GrW for H. Grassmann, *Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda*; KRPV for A. B. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, HOS vols. 31, 32; MVM for A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, RVR for M. Bloomfield, *Rig-Veda Repetitions*, HOS vols. 20, 24; VeInd for A. A. Macdonell and A. B. Keith, *Vedic Index*.

then in vogue. Much of all this probably does not appear in the preserved Vedic literature or is not explicitly expounded or clearly reproduced. As Professor Kunhan Raja put it (*Asya Vāmasya Hymn*, p. xxxviii), "The contents of the poem turn out to be a riddle to us because we have lost the clue to the correct interpretation of the poem." We can perhaps visualize the situation if we think of someone not fully steeped in the Christian faith trying to interpret church hymns. Even many Christians with a fair background of Christian doctrine, legend, and practice might be mystified by much in Christian hymnology. The author (or authors) of RV 1.164 endeavored to use poetic—or religiously or philosophically poetic—language of a highly self-conscious and pedantic kind rather than to practise intentional obfuscation. The problem, therefore, is to find in the preserved early Vedic literature parallel passages, clarifying allusions, or merely obscure hints with which to sense the author's thought and then use them as a basis for logical analysis and deduction to give his meaning precision.

Secondly, the hymn has a unity, which has been briefly stated above in the "Summary of Subject Matter treated in the Hymn." The notions combined in that summary were not all immediately obvious at the beginning of this study, but as they developed they seemed to give the hymn consistency and purpose and explain why it was composed.

The idea that the hymn has a unity and is not just a series of disconnected or poorly connected riddles has been previously advanced loosely and by implication rather than explicitly or very coherently by Haug (1875)¹ and Henry (1894).² It has been developed much more explicitly and in detail by Deussen (1894),³ Kunhan Raja (1956, 1963),⁴ and the late Professor Agrawala (1963).⁵

¹ M. Haug, "Vedische Räthselfragen und Räthsel-sprüche (Uebersetzung und Erklärung von Rīgv. 1.164)," *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philologischen Classe d. bairischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München*, 1875, pp. 457-515.

² Victor Henry, *Les Livres VIII et IX de l'Ātharva-Veda*, traduits et commentés, Paris, J. Maisonneuve, 1894, 107-114, 143-157.

³ Paul Deussen, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie*, erste Band, erste Abteilung, erste Teil: Die Philosophie der Inder, erste Periode, die Hymnenzeit III.3. "Das Einheitslied der Dīrghatamas, Rīgv. 1.164." Vierte Auflage, Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1920, 1², pp. 105-119.

⁴ C. Kunhan Raja, *Asya Vāmasya Hymn (The Riddle*

Haug looked upon the hymn as intentionally and consistently given to riddles and riddlesome questions, which are left to the hearers to resolve (p. 459). Only one of the riddles, he said, is answered in the text, namely the brahmodya of stanzas 34, 35 (pp. 461, 464), though the hieratically educated, he believed, could doubtless penetrate them all, and he ventured the suggestion that the author's name or nickname Dīrghatamas "Long (or Deep) Darkness" may refer to the obscurity caused by the mystical covering in which he encased his meaning. In pointing out the prevailing impenetrability Haug gave the hymn a kind of stylistic unity but did not trace a unity of thought.

Henry found in the hymn a series of small religio-magical riddles on natural phenomena ("petites devinettes naturalistes"), often of a naïve character such as would appeal, he said, to a primitive taste like that of the Iroquois or the African negroes. The best way to solve them, he thought, was to put them in plain terms so as to compare them with analogous specimens offered by universal folklore (p. 143). Therefore, he said, he translated them in the spirit of artless naturalism ("dans l'esprit de naturalisme ingenu," p. 144). This produces a kind of unity in primitivism, which, however, fails to reveal much of the hymn's sacerdotal purpose of exalting the Sacrifice, the Sun, and Agni, and proclaiming Vāc as the Absolute.

Deussen considered the hymn devoted to an exposition of monism, but this view surely needs some qualification. There is indeed monism in the hymn centered on Vāc, but that is not the primary message of the hymn. Rather, the hymn presents monism as background to its presentation of the Sun, the Sacrifice, and Agni and not as its dominant theme. Further in expressing monism the hymn seems to affirm that Vāc herself is the One Real (*ékam sāt*, 46), a point which Deussen does not make clear. Nor does he appear to get the full significance of the emission by Vāc of the *salilāni*, the *samudrāḥ*, the *pradīśaḥ*, and the

of the Universe) *R̥gveda 1.164*, Madras, Ganesh and Co., 1956. See also a later work, *Poet-Philosophers of the R̥gveda, Vedic and Pre-Vedic*, Madras, Ganesh and Co., Private Ltd., 1963, pp. 1-49.

⁵ V. S. Agrawala, *The Thousand-Syllabled Speech*. Vol. 1. *Vision in Long Darkness*, Varanasi, Vedāranyaka Ashram (Distributor, Prithivi Prakashan, Varanasi 5), 1963.

akṣāram (41, 42). Nevertheless he dealt suggestively and informatively and correctly with a number of difficult passages.

Professor C. Kunhan Raja says, "It is possible to trace some continuity and to detect some unity in the whole poem . . . One thing is certain; this is not a haphazard jumble of verses in a single hymn. There is a unity and there is continuity of thought also, within the whole poem."⁶ Yet he does not demonstrate a clear unity nor trace a continuity, apparently finding himself unable to do so because of the many missing links he found in the thought.

Professor Agrawala considers the hymn to be a cosmogonic work. As he puts it, *Īrghatamas* "grapples with Long Darkness, or Mystery of Creation."⁷ He quotes from Keith (KRPV, HOS 32.435): "In this long hymn of *Īrghatamas*, we have a great series of riddles, but there is to be seen in them some degree of cohesion, the influence of the doctrine of the unity of the world." Professor Agrawala gives his own interpretation of the hymn:⁸ "What the *Ṛishi* has done in this hymn of 52 verses should be clearly understood. His single purpose is to bring together a number of Vedic doctrines about cosmogony which, in one word, we may say was *Srishti Vidyā*. He has by choice employed the whole gamut of Vedic ideas about the cosmos and its creation and has adopted a symbolical language, constituted by the entire alphabet of the many *Vidyās* or *lores* relating to the gods, metres, time, the universal Cow, Two Birds, Speech, the Upper and the Lower, the Indestructible One, Heated Boiler, Father-Mother Principle, Sacrifice, and several others." In his elucidation of the separate stanzas Professor Agrawala draws from post-Rigvedic literature even more extensively than from Rigvedic and refers to many ideas and teachings which cannot be overtly supported from the *Rigveda* or even from the other *Samhitās*, involving varieties of mysticism for which the *Samhitās* offer no evidence unless one reads into Vedic terms esoteric or unexpressed implications based upon much later usage of those terms or of what Professor Agrawala takes to be related terms.

Continuity in the hymn is less clearly observable

than unity. There is a certain amount of repetition, and digressive material seems to be introduced in several places without indication of the reason for introducing it. It seems necessary, however, to seek the reason for the apparent digressions, and for this see below under "Structure of the Hymn."

Thirdly, in trying to penetrate the author's meaning it seems important to rely to the maximum upon material found in the *Rigveda* itself and to use later material sparingly, and only as confirmatory, rather than primary, evidence, that is, to use it with extreme caution.

Fourthly, we should be prepared to find the same phenomenon or personality referred to by varying epithets or in varying allusions, or, very occasionally, to find the same epithet used of more than one personality. Ambiguities arise from this fact, especially in the case of *Agni* and the *Sun*, for whose assimilation see MVM 93 and elsewhere. A number of stanzas in our hymn might be interpreted as applying to either one of the two, e.g., stanzas 1, 7, 22. In such cases an effort is made here to interpret according to context. Again, statements are sometimes made which might refer to *Vāc* or to *Agni* or to the *Sun*; here again what appears to be the logic of the context governs the interpretation.

Finally, we may note some general Vedic attitudes which have a bearing upon notions of cosmogony. One could be called the principle of priority. When something precedes another, either in time or in space, it is likely to be called the latter's father or mother or source. Another general attitude is the value, in many cases magic value, attached to numbers, especially three, four, five, seven, which may lead at any time to a forced use of them. Numbers themselves seem to have a special religious or magical potency which makes them attractive to Vedic poets.

STRUCTURE OF THE HYMN

Textual criticism appears important in understanding the hymn. Stanzas 1-47 are reproduced with some variations, omissions, and additions in AV as hymns 9.9 (RV stanzas 1-22) and 9.10 (RV stanzas 23-47), while stanzas 48-52 are omitted. These facts have led to two assumptions: first, that the RV version is a blend of two hymns which were originally separate; and, second,

⁶ *Asya Vāmasya Hymn*, p. xxxvi.

⁷ Agrawala, op. cit., Preface, p. i; Introduction, p. 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

that stanzas 48-52 are a later, irrelevant addition to the original form of RV 1.164. Neither assumption is capable of proof.

With respect to the view that stanzas 1-47 were originally two separate hymns, a division after stanza 22 seems less logical than a division would be after stanza 25. Stanzas 20-25 constitute a unit dealing with the attainment of immortality, a problem raised in stanza 20 and answered in stanzas 21-22 as lying in instruction received from Agni, which instruction is made specific in stanzas 24-25. Even if it were conceded that 24-25 could be separated from 20-23, it would remain true that they do not provide a good prelude to stanzas 26-30, which deal with the pravargya rite. It seems more reasonable to assume that the AV found stanzas 1-47 together in a single hymn but separated them, and the likelihood that this is the case is heightened by the fact that the AV has the two supposed separate hymns in immediate sequence.

With respect to the other assumption—that stanzas 48-52 are an accretion—we may view those stanzas by starting with the last of them and working forward. Stanzas 51-52 are a prayer or charm to bring rain. In addition, stanza 51 is in a different metre from the rest of the hymn, though that point should not be overstressed. The prayer could well enough be an addition. Stanza 50 may be borrowed from RV 10.90.16—there is other parallelism between our hymn and RV 10.90, as in the case of our stanza 45 (cf. RV 10.90.3). Stanza 49 of our hymn is a prayer to Sarasvatī (Vāc?) for blessing, as stanza 40 is also a prayer to Vāc (for identification of Vāc with Sarasvatī in the Brāhmaṇas see note to stanza 49). Stanza 48 deals with the Sun's function of creating and maintaining time, as does stanza 11 but with some variation, and could be an echo or amplification of the latter. It is possibly meant to reinforce the view expressed in stanzas 10-12 that it is Vāc, not Time, which is the Absolute. The stanzas 48-52 as a group, then, could be an addition to stanzas 1-47, which in their turn may be viewed as representing three levels of reporting, as will now be suggested in specific terms.

The hymn would be in three Parts, with a Colophon, this last consisting of at least stanzas 51-52 and possibly, in fact probably, some or all of stanzas 48-50. The three Parts are: first, stanzas 1-30; second, stanzas 31-42; third, stanzas 43-47,

with possibly, but not probably, some or all of stanzas 48-52. Each of the three Parts purports to be a part of Dīrghatamas's transcendental vision or conceivably a separate vision, and is introduced by the verb *apaśyam* "I have seen, I saw." The Colophon seems to be unoriginal.

Stanzas 1-30, constituting Part I, would be the oldest portion of the hymn.

Stanzas 31-42, as Part II, would be the next report, a supplement to Part I. The first stanza of Part II (31) carries us back to a topic treated in stanza 2 of Part I, which is a description of the Sun. Stanza 32 speaks of the daily death of the Sun, a new topic, while stanzas 33-36 tell of the parentage and conception of Dawn, another new topic. Stanzas 37-38 treat of the Sun's double quality as being both immortal and mortal, still another new topic, leading to an allusion to the importance of Vāc, again a new topic. This last theme is amplified in stanzas 39-42, where Vāc's supremacy and creative activity are affirmed.

Part III (43-47) opens with a description of a sacrifice (43-44), possibly repeating the theme of stanza 3, which concerns the first sacrifice, but here the sacrifice is described differently. It is a sacrifice of the partition of Vāc, which is described in stanzas 45-46. The partition is a new topic, not mentioned in Parts I and II. Stanza 47 supplements and amplifies the material in stanza 7 about the source of rain.

Parts II and III, therefore, fill in gaps in Part I, as though to answer questions which listeners might have raised on hearing Dīrghatamas's first report and which he answers here with further details of his vision.

The important part of the Colophon, whatever its original extent, lies in the two prayers it contains—one to Sarasvatī (Vāc?) for prosperity (49), the other constituting a charm to bring rain (52). These give the hymn an immediate, concrete, and practical application, a feature frequently appearing in Rig Vedic and other Vedic literature.

In the accompanying *Table* the stanzas of the three Parts and the Colophon with their themes are shown in parallel vertical columns. Correspondences are on the same horizontal alignment. New topics treated in Parts II and III are shown opposite gaps in Part I which they fill in. It will be seen that the total material of the three parts, if they were telescoped and presented in a single column, would follow a continuous logical sequence.

COSMOLOGY AND COSMOGONY

The cosmological and cosmogonic notions of the hymn do not constitute an integrated system and do not conform as a whole to any other set of views exposed in the Rīg Veda. In expressing monism in stanzas 41-43, 45-46 the hymn presents a view that might be called intellectually "advanced" or "late" but along with that the hymn also echoes ideas that belong intellectually to "early" levels of Vedic thought, as, for example, in what appear to be allusions to the seven cosmic Waters (3, 36) and the heroic feats of Indra and Soma (19). The exaltation of the sacrifice throughout the hymn might be looked upon as belonging to an intellectually "middle" stage of speculative development.

The description of Dīrghatamas's ideas which now follows is restricted to this hymn without any but sporadic comparisons with, or contrasts to, other Vedic material.

The hymn views the universe as consisting of two antithetical parts, to which it does not give names. It is clear that one part is above the other, for the Sun rises each morning from the lower part to the upper and in the evening descends to the lower part. The upper part is the realm of men and gods and consists of two worlds, earth and sky, each of which is tripartite. In consequence the hymn speaks of the six worlds (6). The two worlds are propped apart or supported or sustained or stabilized by the Sun, that is, they are not chaotic and unsteady but have a fixed form and a definite relationship to each other, which is maintained by the Sun (10, 14, possibly 6, 13). In the upper part of the universe the *ṛtá*, cosmic order or truth, exists, though the hymn does not say so specifically. It does, however, refer to the *ṛtá* (8, 11, 37, 47). The two worlds, sky and earth, are called the Father and the Mother or the six Mothers and Fathers (6, 10, 13, 14, 31, 33). Between these two worlds is the atmosphere (33). There is some reason to think that surrounding the earth is an ocean, from which the Sun emerges every morning, when light rays carrying water ascend to the sky (7). Though each of the two worlds is tripartite, that characterization has little significance in the hymn, but another conception, namely, that heaven is in two parts, has an important relation to the hymn's thought. Heaven is divided into those two parts by a vault (*nāka*), which is impenetrable to mortals. The upper part

is the abode of Vāc, the gods, and the other immortals (for the foregoing data see 10, 18, 39, 41, 45, 50). The lower heaven, up to the vault, is the limit of the Sun's ascent (12), doubtless because of its mortality.

Below the realm of sky, atmosphere, and earth is the lower of the two parts of the universe, a place of chaos, the realm of Nirṛti "Destruction." This the Sun enters every evening and dies (32), but emerges from it newborn every morning (26-30, 38). The Sun not only keeps heaven and earth in place but also provides light, heat, and moisture to both earth and heaven (7, 47, 51, 52). But presumably because the Sun dies every evening on entering the underworld while only its life-force (*āyus*) being immortal remains alive, and returns to life only on emerging the next morning, the underworld is a tumultuous chaos, wherein nothing has a fixed place, and is devoid of light, heat, and moisture.

The two realms are the Sat and the Asat of the Indra-Vṛtra myth (cf. *JAOS* 61.76 ff. and *JAOS* 85.24) and are recognized in somewhat different guise in RV 10.72.2-4 and RV 10.129.1.

The supreme authority in this universe is Vāc, whose place is in the upper heaven (10). From her, who is mistress of the *akṣára* "(creative) syllable," and possesses a thousand, that is, all, syllables (*saháśrākṣarā*, 41), came the potent sounds used in the first sacrifice. This sacrifice has to be reproduced every morning to make the Sun rise and keep the universe in operation, and the ritual for this is known to priests who are qualified to comprehend it. The ritual comes to priests from Agni, who received it from Vāc. Agni, the first-born of the *ṛtá* (37), directed the first sacrifice (1) and communicates about the sacrifice with priests today (21).

The origin of the whole cosmic structure is in Vāc. The hymn offers no information about the origin of Vāc or description of her qualities, if indeed they are describable, or wherein lies her metaphysical power. She is, however, the One Real (45, 46). She fashioned the *salilāni* "tumultuous chaotic floods" (41), which recalls the statement in RV 10.129.3 that the *salilá* (sg.) was present at the beginning, but no question is raised there about its origin. Next the (heavenly) oceans flowed forth from her, in consequence of which the four directions exist (42), and then the *akṣára* "syllable" flowed from her, on which this entire

TABLE. Topics treated in separate stanzas of RV 1.164, shown according to theory that the hymn consists of three parts, and a colophon, which are complementary. Sequences are shown vertically, correspondences horizontally.

Part I (1-30)	Part II (31-42)	Part III (43-47)	Colophon (48-52)
1. Vision of Agni			
2. Vision of Sun	31. Vision of Sun		
3. Vision of First Sacrifice			
4. Origin of Agni (?)			
5. Agni as warp of First Sacrifice			
6. What was the One that took form of Sun?	32. (Daily) death of Sun		
7. Where was Sun before birth? Source of rain	33. Parentage of Dawn 34-35. Ceremony at Dawn's conception 36. Dawn's conception		
8. Dawn conceives Sun			
9. Dawn deserts Sun			
10. Sun rises to sky	37-38. Sun is both immortal and mortal		
11. Sun establishes Year and Time	39. Power of the <i>akṣára</i> 40. May Vāc prosper 41. Vāc employs potent sounds 42. Vāc emits chaotic floods and unorganized material of universe		48. Sun establishes Year 49. May Sarasvatī (Vāc) favor us
		43-44. Sacrifice to produce partition of Vāc 45-46. Partition of Vāc	
12. Is Time the Absolute or dependent?			
13-14. Sun supports worlds			
15-16. Sun produces Months, which determine sacrificial year			
17-18. Where was Sun born?			
19. First rites valid today			
20-25. How to win immortality			50. First rites valid today
26-29. Pravargya ceremony			
30. Sun rises		47. Sun rises; theory of rain	
			51. Sacrifice as rainmaker 52. Prayer for rain

universe has its existence (42). At this point "the heroes" (*virāḥ*) took over to perform the first sacrifice (43), but who they were or what their origin the hymn does not say. It seems that the first sacrificers did not function until Agni was present but, when he was, they, who were gods (*devāḥ*), as kavis stretched out seven threads over him as the warp on which they wove the woof of the sacrifice (5). (On the basis of RV 10.72 it might be assumed that these gods were the Ādityas, but, if so, where did they come from? Unlike RV 10.72 this hymn offers no information.) This seems to be the point at which three "long-haired ones" appear, who may be Agni, Sūrya, and Vāyu (44). Vāc was divided in four parts, but by whom is not stated. Was it by "the heroes" (43) or by "the long-haired ones" (44)? Or were the heroes and the long-haired ones the same? In parallel Rigvedic passages the gods divide Vāc manifoldly (RV 10.125.3) or the ṛṣis divide her (RV 10.71.3). In our hymn the division does not appear to be an act of the ṛṣis. Wise Brahmins, immortal because wise, know all four parts of Vāc, but mortals "speak" (*vadanti*) only one of them. Vāc is the One Real (*ékaṃ sāt*); when the one-fourth part of her is divided she is many gods (46).

Immortality is the share of those with full ritual knowledge (22-25), which is metaphysical in its origin and is taught by Agni. This knowledge leads to the proper use of the metres (23-25) and the *akṣāra* (39) in fashioning and using hymns. Proper performance of the sacrifice guarantees immortality in heaven (50). Only a few favored persons seem to receive Vāc (39; cf. RV 10.125.5; 10.71.4) and can enjoy the bliss of immortality in heaven. Most of them seem in the eyes of the author of this hymn to be priests. Other persons would presumably end in the lap of Nirṛti "Destruction." This is obviously a sacerdotal view of man's hope and despair. It seems implied also that failure to perform the sacrifice daily and correctly would result in collapse of the cosmic system and a return to the primordial chaos, though the hymn makes no explicit statement to that effect.

From the point of view of the hymn the key to the welfare of mankind and of the cosmos lies in continued activity of the Sun. He supports the worlds (2, 6, 10-11, 31), and he created and maintains time (11-16, 48), thus establishing and constantly renewing the sacrificial year.

The Sun's mother is Uṣas (8, 27-29) and his father is Dyaus (8). Uṣas is the daughter of Dyaus and Pṛthivī (8, 33) and her conception is described (33-36), a very public affair and a very holy one. The conception of the Sun by Uṣas was, therefore, a case of incest (8). The place of the Sun's birth is unknown (17-18), for Uṣas disappeared to bear him (9, 17-18). At birth she deserted him and he sought her; in doing so he rose to heaven, reaching the vault (*nāka*) that separates the lower heaven from the upper but did not enter the upper heaven (9-10), probably because he was mortal and could not. He did not at first know his mission, but Agni approached him and he received a portion of Vāc. Thus he became immortal as well as mortal (37-38). This we should probably understand to mean that his life-force (*āyus*) is immortal but the body which encases it is mortal. Hence the Sun dies every evening (32), but in doing so and entering Nirṛti "Destruction" the Sun is full of progeny (32), that is, destined to have an innumerable lineage. The new birth of the Sun is accomplished or aided by the pravargya ceremony (26-30). We should perhaps understand that when born anew the Sun rises out of the ocean surrounding the earth (7).

An interesting feature of the hymn is its theory of rain, which is described in stanzas 7, 47, 51, 52. In the first of these stanzas it is stated that, while the Sun was still concealed and before it appeared out of the ocean, the cows, a metaphor for light rays, wearing a covering, drank water with the foot. The covering is not explained here but in stanza 47 it is made clear that the covering consists of water (*apó vāsānā divam út patanti* "clothed in the waters they rise up to the sky"). In the sky the cows (rays) draw milk from the Sun's head (7) and then descend from the sky to the earth. The water which they take to the earth with them is now metaphorically called milk, since it is the nourishing rain, which, as stanza 47 says, causes the earth to be moistened with fatness (*ād id ghṛtēna pṛthivī vy ūdyate*). In the latter stanza the metaphor describing the rays is changed and they are called "yellow birds" (*hārayah suparnāḥ*) which fly up along the dark path (*krṣṇām ni-yānam*), possibly a reference to the blackness of night. They are apparently induced to fly up or helped to do so by the sympathetic magic of the yellow flames of the sacrifice mounting skyward along with the dark smoke. Two stanzas later in

49 the poet invokes the deified heavenly stream Sarasvatī, who is possibly the same as Vāc, to present her inexhaustible breast to be sucked, the breast with which she causes all the choicest things to flourish (*yás te stánaḥ śásayó yó mayobhūr yéna víśvā pūṣyasi vāryāni / yó ratnadhā vasuvíd yāḥ súdātraḥ sárasvati tám ihá dhātave kaḥ*). In stanza 51 he makes the further statement that the water ascends to the sky and descends to the earth equally in a year (*samānám etád udakám úc caity áva cáhabhiḥ*). He continues in that stanza by connecting the process with the sacrifice, saying that while the rain clouds vivify the earth, the flames (of the sacrifice) vivify the sky. In the next stanza (52), which is the final stanza of the hymn, he asks help of the great heavenly bird (the Sun), which brings us delight with the rains and is full of life-giving moisture (*abhīpató vṛṣṭībhis tarpáyantaṁ sárasvantaṁ ávase johavimi*). As the hymn stands this final prayer is a concrete benefit expected from its use. If the RV version originally ended with stanza 47, which refers to the source of rain, then that stanza could have suggested to the poet, possibly not Dīrghatamas himself, to end the enlarged version with a prayer to the Sun to bring rain. Oldenberg (SBE 46.250), not noting stanzas 7 and 47, sees in stanza 51 Agni as the one who brings rain. Agni seems to be a rain-bringer in RV 1.79.1-3. For Agni and the Sun to share the same function need occasion no surprise.

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

The hymn is concerned only with the kind of knowledge that its author considers important. This is metaphysical knowledge, the knowledge of higher things, consisting of the operation of the universe and the attainment of immortality. Dīrghatamas won this knowledge in transcendental vision, but unlike John Bunyan he did not see "in the similitude of a dream." Rather, he tells us, he searched with mind intent, looking for someone to answer his questions (stanzas 4-6). By exercising mental concentration one may gain the vision transcendental. Three times (stanzas 1, 31, 43) the hymn has the narrator say *apaśyam* "I have seen, I saw"—we might put it "I saw the vision splendid!" In another passage an inquirer asks the significant question *kó dadarśa* "Who saw, who has seen," and the point seems to be that, since there is no tradition stemming from someone

having sensory experience at the time, who himself saw the newborn structured one when the unstructured one bore him (4), the only source of knowledge has to be revelation, mystic sight. Such knowledge is won by mental activity (*mānasā*, stanza 5), that is, by intuition. A person possessed of knowledge gained in this manner is "possessed of insight (*manīṣin*, stanza 45) or is an "inspired priest" (*vīpra*, stanza 46) or "possesses the quality of a kavi (*kavīyāmāna*, stanza 18). This method of gaining knowledge is mentioned in a number of other Rigvedic passages (e.g. 1.163.6; 10.72.1; 10.81.4; 10.124.9; 10.129.4; 10.130.6). Those who have such knowledge are the happy few who are successful in their religious, should we say ritualistic, activities. As our hymn puts it. "The *akṣára* of the *īc*, on which the gods in highest heaven have all taken their seat—what will he who does not know it accomplish by means of the *īc*? Just those who know it sit together here" (39).

In other passages in our hymn Vāc, who knows all, is said to enter or not to enter (*viśva-vidam vācam áviśvaminvām*, 10) or to have her highest heaven in the Brahman pries (35) or to enter through the agency of the firstborn of the *ṛtá*, who is Agni (37). In another stanza Agni is said to have such knowledge (16), and in still another passage it is said "... the mighty herdsman of the whole world (Agni), the wise one, has entered me, the simpleton" (21). Vāc says of herself in RV 10.125.5, "Whomever I give my favor to, him I make powerful, a true knower of the mystical power, a *īṣi*, a successful sacrificer (*yām kāmāye tám-tam ugrām kṛṇomi / tám brahmāṇam tám īṣim tám sumedhām*). Failure to have a portion of Vāc is a calamity for a Vedic priest; it negates all his efforts (RV 10.71, especially stanza 6). Vāc possesses the *akṣára* of the *īc* (39, 42), evidently the most important *akṣára* (24), and indeed possesses a thousand, that is all, *akṣaras* (41). She communicated the metres, which Agni teaches, and with them gives instructions for their use, thus showing men how to create effective ceremonial wording and so attain immortality (21-25).

The source of all true knowledge, then, is Vāc, who may communicate it directly to whomever she favors. Or, since she has communicated it to Agni, he may transmit it to human priests. To gain such knowledge one must resort to mental activity, that is, introspection or meditation, and

in trance so induced receive that knowledge in transcendental vision. Dīrghatamas has been successful in gaining that knowledge and so have his colleagues (39). To Dīrghatamas, a convinced ritualist, knowledge of the ritual constitutes that knowledge (cf. also RV 10.71, which the Anukramāṇi says has *jñānam* "Knowledge" as its deity). With knowledge one can see the great events of the past, understand the cosmos and know its origin, perform effective sacrifices, achieve immortality. Thus it is possible for the poet to say: "From her (Vāc) flow forth the oceans, in consequence of which the four directions exist; from her flows the *akṣāra*; on it this entire universe has its existence" (42), and to say further that Vāc is the gods and, even more, is the One Existent (45-46), the Absolute.⁹

THE ARGUMENT

PART I (stanzas 1-30)

In the first three stanzas Dīrghatamas announces a mystic vision (*apaśyam*), which had a triple quality. He saw Agni, meaning the original, eldest form of Agni, the hotṛ, chief priest, lord of the tribes, accompanied by his seven sons. (1). He saw the Sun in the guise of a one-wheeled car, on which all these worlds have their place. (2). Similarly he saw the first Sacrifice, again in the form of a car. (3) All three parts of his vision are closely linked, because Agni prescribed the ritual for the first Sacrifice, which produced the Sun.

Dīrghatamas then in four stanzas poses a series of four questions, which stand in logical sequence. These concern the origin of Agni, the nature of the first Sacrifice, the One (neut.) which was the animating principle of the Sun, the place where the Sun was before its appearance. He begins with Agni's origin and asks, "Who saw the newborn structured one (masc., Agni) when the unstructured one (fem., Earth) bore him?" But he leaves the question unanswered. Later in stanza 37 he speaks of Agni as "the firstborn of the *ṛtā*" (*prathamajāḥ ṛtāya*), an epithet also given to Agni in RV 10.5.7. Here he may mean that Agni is as emanation or creation of Vāc. (4).

He goes on to report on the first Sacrifice, in which the gods set down "footprints," that is, established precedents, for future sacrifices. As kavis they stretched out seven threads over the calf (Agni, the sacrificial fire) just after it was born (?). This was the warp on which to weave the woof of the Sacrifice. (5)

Now Dīrghatamas brings up the third question, to which again he does not at this time venture an answer: What was the One (neut.) which in the form of the (as yet) Unborn (Sun) propped apart these six regions (of heaven and earth)? An answer to the question about the One is given in stanzas 41-46, where Vāc is called the One Real (*ēkaṃ sāt*). (6).

Then he poses the fourth question: Let him who really knows proclaim where the place of that benign bird (the Sun) was located (before its appearance in the worlds). From its head, he adds, the cows (rays) draw milk; when wearing a covering they drank water with the foot. He does not answer this question directly but implies that the Sun was in the ocean; cf. notes to the translation of this stanza and the discussion of Dīrghatamas's theory of rain in the last part of the section of the Introduction entitled "Cosmology and Cosmogony." (7).

The hymn now deals with the parentage of the Sun. It was begotten on Uṣas, the Dawn, by her own father Dyaus in accordance with supreme order (*ṛtā*) and in spite of her reluctance, while reverent worshippers (the kavis mentioned in stanza 5?) gave applause. Later in stanza 33 the hymn designates Dawn's parentage. (8). When the calf (Sun) was born, the cow (Dawn), yoked to her car, mentioned as Dakṣiṇā's car, deserted it, while it in turn searched for her "in three stages," which may be earth, atmosphere, and sky. (9). Left solitary, the Sun went upward, supporting the three Mothers (Earth) and the three Fathers (Sky), that is, the two worlds, each of which is tripartite. Never do they weary him. But high though he went, there was still Vāc above him in the upper heaven, which, as other passages indicate, is above the vault (*nāka*) that separates the upper heaven from the lower, and this the text says he did not reach. Vāc knows all but does not enter all, that is, does not impart her knowledge to all. She appears not to have imparted it herself to the Sun but, as stanza 37 indicates, to have transmitted it to him through the medium of Agni. (10).

⁹ A long, thorough, many-faceted, and detailed study of Vedic beliefs about acquiring metaphysical knowledge through mystical experience has been published by J. Gonda, *The Vision of the Vedic Poets*, The Hague, Mouton, 1963.

The Sun creates time or the year and regulates it. This is a wheel with twelve spokes (months), on which rest 720 sons in pairs; these last are the days and nights. (11). Dīrghatamas records a difference of opinion as to whether Time or the Year, here called the Father, with twelve aspects, is in the upper half of heaven or is (merely) the wide-seeing one (the Sun) in the lower half. The issue, it seems is whether or not Time or the Year is to be considered the supreme force, the source of all (as in AV 19.53 and 54). If not, it would be Vāc who is the Absolute, as Dīrghatamas makes clear in stanzas 41-46 is his own view, and it is she who occupies the upper heaven, as is stated in stanza 10. (12). The wheel of the Sun (or of Time or the Year) has revolved from yore without its axle getting hot or it being damaged. (13). Over the outstretched (Earth) it presses on; all the worlds are kept in motion on it. (14). Being ritualistically conscious, Dīrghatamas now mentions the intercalary month, which disturbs the normal sacrificial year. (15). The months, he reminds us, are both feminine and masculine, a paradox understood by Agni, who, it is implied, makes the necessary modification in the ritual which the intercalary month requires. (16).

The hymn now takes up the mystery of where the Dawn went to give birth to the Sun. It was below the upper (part of our universe) and above the lower (part), that is, the place was between heaven and earth and therefore somewhere in the atmosphere. (17). Who can tell us, he asks, the birthplace of the Sun, which here appears to be called the divine mind. (18). The rites by which the gods brought these things to pass are valid now as they were then. The same observances as those of Indra and Soma (in ancient times) continue to be yoked to the chariot pole of the atmosphere and draw it on. (19).

The hymn then takes up the problem of winning immortality, the great purpose of much metaphysical speculation in the Saṃhitās and the Upanishads, and in doing so employs the parable of two birds on the same tree, one of whom eats the sweet fruit it bears, while the other looks on without eating (apparently not seeing the fruit, though it looks). The tree is the tree of knowledge; the birds are two contrasting types of priests; and the fruit is immortality. (20). Here (at the sacrifice), where the birds (priests) in conclave flawlessly laud their immortality, the

mighty herdsman of the whole world (Agni) has entered me, the simpleton. (21) That tree on which all the birds that eat the sweet fruit light and breed—no one eats the sweet fruit at its tip, they say, unless he knows the father (who is Agni). (22). Only those gain immortality who understand the structure of the *gāyatrī*, *triṣṭubh*, and *jāgat* metres and the construction of hymns with them—of course, it is Agni who imparts this knowledge. (23). One must know how to fashion a hymn, a chant, a unit of recitation, a whole recitation, and with the “syllable” (*akṣāra*) the seven *vāṇīh*. We shall see later (stanzas 39-42) that the all-important *akṣāra* comes ultimately from Vāc. (24). Indra (?) used the *jāgat* metre and the *rathamtarā* chant and so won success. (25).

At this point Dīrghatamas narrates a celebration of the pravargya rite, which is observed in the early morning and with the use of sympathetic magic brings, or helps to bring, dawn and the sunrise. We may plausibly assume that this involves an application of the teaching in stanzas 23-25 concerning the use of metres, chants, and tones. An earthenware pot is heated and fresh milk is poured in it. The milk boils up, knocks off the lid, and overflows on the fire. The rite described here seems likely to be the original pravargya observance by the gods as Dīrghatamas saw it in his vision.

Someone not named invokes Dawn, here called a cow, and happily announces that the pot is heated. (26). The mistress of riches (Dawn), snuffling at here calf (the Sun) and seeking it, has come to give milk for the Aśvins. Let her increase for prosperity! The snuffling of the cow is the hissing or humming sound of the milk as it is being heated. (27). She mooes at her calf (the bubbling of the boiling milk) and swells with milk. (28). The pot sings (as though chanting) and becoming lightning fells the mortal (enemy), knocking off the lid. (29). In the middle one of Agni's (three) homes (earth, atmosphere, sky) lies the breathing, swift-moving, living, restless, enduring One (neut.), which may well be the milk represented by some neuter word, standing for the life-force (*āyus*, neut.) of the reborn Sun. The stanza says that the life of the dead one (Sun) fares according to its constituent nature (*svadhābhih*), adding that the immortal has a common origin (*sāyonih*) with the mortal, a statement which may mean that the immortal life-force has

a common origin with the mortal body it occupies. (30).

PART II (stanzas 31-42)

Dirghatamas now starts the second part of his report of the vision. He says he saw (*apaśyam*) the Sun with its concentrated yet spreading rays rolling on among the worlds. (31). Then in what seems to be a reference to the Sun's death in the evening he says that he who made him (the Sun) knows not of him. He who saw him—he is out of that one's sight. Enclosed within the Mother's (the earth's) womb, yet full of progeny, he (the Sun) has entered Nirrti "Destruction." This could be interpreted to mean that the Sun's life-force is immortal because—if this is the significance of stanza 37 below—Agni transmitted to the Sun when it was born a portion of Vāc, thus giving it immortality. But the Sun's body is mortal and perishes every evening. (32).

The next topic treated is the conception of Dawn, a topic not treated in Dirghatamas's first report. The Dawn herself speaks. She says that the Sky Father and the Great Earth were her parents, and the place of her conception was the "navel," which is the atmosphere. The womb was between the outstretched hemispheres (sky and earth). Here the Father deposited his daughter's embryo. (33). The conception was initiated by a sacrificial ceremony indicated by a ritualistic riddle. A speaker asks four questions which concern the statement which Dawn has just made in the preceding stanza. The questions are: What is the farthest extent of the earth? What is the navel of the universe? What is the semen of the lusty stallion? What is the supreme heaven of Vāc? (34). The answers are: This altar is the farthest extent of the earth; this sacrifice is the navel of the universe; this soma is the semen of the lusty stallion; this Brahman priest is the supreme heaven of Vāc. (35). All is now ready for the conception. The seven wombs of the world halves (earth and sky) and the semen at Vishnu's command takes their places in the wide expanse. With holy prayers and intent mind, circumambient, the wombs surround the semen on all sides. It may be surmised that in filling out his first report by adding this account of Dawn's conception, Dirghatamas was supplying an explanation of Dawn's reluctance to let Dyaus, her father, im-

pregnate her with the Sun, as was recounted above in stanza 8. (36).

The next two stanzas further supplement Dirghatamas's first report by explaining how it is that the Sun is immortal as well as mortal. Someone speaks, apparently the Sun, saying, "I do not know (historical pres.?) just what this is that I am. Concealed, restrained, I range with mind concentrated. When the firstborn of the *ṛtā* (Agni) approached me, then I got a portion of that Vāc." Thus the Sun acquired immortality, which accompanies its mortality. (37). The next stanza tells us: One goes away, one comes, compelled by its inner quality (*svadhāyā*). The immortal has a common origin (*sāyonih*) with the mortal. The two constantly travel opposite each other. When people perceive the one, they do not perceive the other. The stanza seems to concern the dying Sun and the new born Sun, which do not exist at the same time (cf. stanza 32 above). When the Sun dies its life-force continues because it is immortal, since the Sun received a portion of Vāc through the medium of Agni, as the preceding stanza relates (cf. comments on stanzas 20-23 and 30). The Sun's body, however, perishes. People, therefore, do not see two Suns at once. (38).

Having mentioned or alluded to Vāc a half a dozen times (stanzas 6, 10, 12, 24, 34, 37), Dirghatamas now deals with her in explicit terms and asserts her supremacy as the Absolute. He starts by affirming the importance of the *akṣāra* of the *īc*, on which the gods in highest heaven have all taken their seat. What will he who does not know it (*akṣāra*) accomplish? Just those who know it sit together here. (39). Then follows a pious prayer that the cow (Vāc) may prosper so that we too (the conclave at the sacrifice) may prosper. (40). He continues by reporting the origin of unorganized matter from Vāc. The buffalo cow (Vāc) lowed, she who has a thousand *akṣāras*, that is, has all syllables and knows all their combinations. Using various utterances, she produced the chaotic tumultuous floods (*salilāni*), which characterized the precreation chaos. (41). Then there flowed forth from her the oceans, which in their turn produced the directions. From her now flowed the *akṣāra*; on it this entire universe has its existence. Thus Dirghatamas indicates the place of the *akṣāra* in the cosmic evolution: it provided the mantras which the first sacrificers used

to organize the unorganized material of the universe and to produce the Sun. (42).

PART III (stanzas 43-47)

Continuing his exposition of the importance of Vāc, Dīrghatamas, after saying that he saw (*apaśyam*) the coudung smoke (of the sacrifice) from afar, reports that "the heroes" (Ādityas?) sacrificed the spotted ox (soma?). These were the first ordinances. (43). Three "long-haired ones" appear at the appointed time. Throughout the year-long sacrifice one of them (Agni?) consumes (the offerings), one (Sūrya?) surveys the universe through his powers (*śacībhiḥ*), of one (Vāyu?) the onrush is visible but not the form. (44). At this sacrifice, Vāc is divided in four parts. These those Brahmins with insight (and hence with immortality) know. The three parts which are hidden mortals do not activate; the fourth part they speak. (45). They call it Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni. Then there is the heavenly bird Garutmant (the Sun). The inspired priests speak of the One Real (*ékam sāt*, neut.) in many ways. They call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan. (46).

Now the hymn turns to the Sun's rising. The rays, here called "yellow birds," clothed in the waters, fly up along the dark path (of night) to the sky. They have (now) returned from the seat of the *ṛtá*; the earth is moistened with fatness. (47).

COLOPHON (stanzas 48-52)

The sacrifice lasted a year, a fact which is expressed in a simple riddle. (48).

The hymn, now seeking concrete material gain, addresses a prayer to the goddess Sarasvatī, the deified heavenly stream, here probably identified with Vāc, to present her inexhaustible breast to be sucked. (49).

Then the hymn remarks that the gods performed the sacrifice, thus giving us the first ordinances. These powers (arising from the sacrifice) reach to the vault of heaven, where the ancient *sādhyas* are, the gods. (50).

The last two stanzas are a prayer for rain. In the first of them the hymn points out that water ascends to heaven and descends to earth equally throughout the year. This may be a reminder to the Sun, to whom the prayer is addressed, that it has an established duty to send the rain. Then

follows a further remark that, while the rain clouds vivify the earth, the flames (of the sacrifice) vivify the sky. (51). Finally comes the prayer to the Sun: The great heavenly bird, bringing delight to us with the rains, and full of life-giving moisture—him I invoke for help! (52).

TRANSLATION

1. That benign gray priest has a middle brother, the lightning; his third brother is the butter-backed. Here (at the sacrifice?) I have seen the lord of the tribes (Agni) with his seven sons (priests).

Stanzas 1-7 may be viewed as a kind of prelude, in which Dīrghatamas announces his vision (1-3) and states the questions or problems which he is going to deal with first, namely, how Agni come into existence (4), the nature of the first Sacrifice, performed by the gods, which produced the Sun (5), the identity of the One, from which came the power of the Sun (6), and the place where the Sun was before being born (7).

In announcing his vision (*apaśyam*) Dīrghatamas seems to indicate that the setting of the vision is the sacrifice in which he is participating; this would be the significance of the adv. *ātra* "here;" cf. use of *ātra* in stanza 21. There may be a similar meaning in *ātra* . . . *apaśyam* in RV 1.163.5, 7. A sacrificial setting for such a transcendental vision is also indicated in RV 10.72.1, where the speaker, after raising the question of the origins of the gods, says that someone may see them in a later age when the hymns are being chanted (*ukthēṣu śasyāmāneṣu yaḥ pāśyad āttare yugé*).

The three brothers are the three forms of Agni: (1) the original form of Agni as "firstborn of the *ṛtá* (*prathamajā ṛtāśya* in stanza 37; so also in RV 10.5.7); (2) the lightning; and (3) the terrestrial Agni. Being the eldest the original Agni is called "gray," though the adj. *palitāśya* might also, but less aptly, refer to Agni's epithet "smoke-bannered" in RV 10.4.5 (*vāne tasthau palitō dhūmaketuḥ*) and elsewhere (see s. v. *dhūmaketu* in GrW).

The word *ásnaḥ* indicates the lightning, whether it is taken as the nom. sg. of an adj. meaning "voracious" derived from *ás* "eat" or as the gen. sg. of a noun *áśan*, which would be a variant of *áśman* with a meaning "of the rock."

Agni's seven sons are the seven technical priests required by the full ritual, all of whom are separately designated by function in RV 2.1.2 (cf. other references to the seven priests without designation of separate functions in RV 3.7.7; 4.1.12; 20.35.10). Just who were serving as Agni's seven assistants at the (first) sacrifice when Dīrghatamas saw it in vision is not indicated; they might have been the Ādityas as in RV 10.72 or "the gods" (Ādityas?) as in RV 10.90 or the seven *īṣayaḥ* of RV 10.130.5, 6, 7 or the seven *vīprāḥ āngirasaḥ* of RV 4.2.15. "Lord of the tribes" (*viśpāti*) is a frequent epithet of Agni (see s. v. in GrW).

2. Seven yoke the car with its single wheel. One horse with seven names draws the triple-naved, ageless wheel that cannot be checked, on which all these worlds have their place.

The car with the single wheel is the Sun, and this, too, Dirghatamas sees in his vision. "Wheel" is a common term for referring to the Sun (see s. v. *cakrá* in GrW). The horse is Etaṣa (RV 7.63.2; 7.66.14). The seven who yoke the car may be the seven who assist Agni in the preceding stanza and are called his sons. In other passages seven steeds (RV 5.45.9) or seven mares (RV 1.50.9; 4.13.3; 7.66.15) draw the Sun's cars. We may consider that in this passage the single steed with seven names is equivalent to the seven steeds or seven mares of the other passages. The three naves of the chariot wheel according to Yāska (as Geldner points out) are the three seasons of the year (cf. RV 10.90.6). The Sun supports the worlds in stanzas 10 and 14, and possibly in stanza 6.

3. Seven steeds draw the seven who ride upon this seven-wheeled car. Seven sisters call out to the place where the seven names of the cows are located.

This stanza seems to refer to the sacrifice as a car, though there seems to be no parallel figurative use of "car." The nearest approach is Agni's car (see MVM, p. 90), in which he carries the sacrificial offerings to the gods or ascends to heaven. The seven wheels here may be equivalent to the seven offerings (*saptá hotrāṇi*) of RV 3.4.5. Less plausible would be an identification with the seven-wheeled car of Time (*kāla*) in AV 19.53.1. Another seven-wheeled car belongs to Soma and Pūṣan, which measures out the upper space (RV 2.40.3). This could be the Sun's car. Interestingly, the car of Soma and Pūṣan does not enter or pervade or stimulate all, meaning the whole universe; perhaps we should understand that it enters only the lower part of it—the word is *āviśvaminvam*, the only other occurrence of which is in stanza 10 below in application to Vāc. The corresponding positive form *viśvaminvá* is applied to Pūṣan himself in the same hymn (RV 2.40.6).

The seven steeds may be the seven technical priests who officiate at the sacrifice (RV 2.1.2, cited in note to our stanza 1). The seven who ride upon the car may be the seven Ādityas (cf. RV 10.72). The seven sisters would be the seven metres of RV 9.103.3. The seven names of the cows would be a reference by metonymy to the seven Waters (*āpah, sindhavaḥ*), who in the Indra-Vṛtra myth are the joint mothers of the Sun (see JAOS 62.96 f.). Invocation of them by name would be a bit of compulsory magic calculated to make them emerge from confinement.

4. Who saw the newborn structured one (Agni or possibly the Sun) when the unstructured one (Earth?) bore him? Where ever was the Earth's quickening spirit, her blood, her breath? Who

can go seek the answer to this from someone who knows?

This stanza might refer to the birth of Agni or the Sun—Agni seems preferable. The "structured one" as a reference to Agni recalls the fact that he is often considered to be the son of Dyaus and Pṛthivī (see MVM 90 bottom and the passages cited there). If the reference is to Agni, the stanza would be posing an inquiry about the origin of the god who is the subject of the first stanza of this hymn. But if the "structured one" refers to the Sun, the stanza would echo the idea that the first sacrifice regularly effects the creation or birth of the Sun. If it does refer to the Sun's birth, there would be two possible interpretations of the stanza: (1) it might indicate that Dirghatamas does not accept the theory that the Sun was born from the Earth, or (2) he accepts the theory, but thinks the Sun was at first concealed (cf. stanza 7 below) and was brought out of concealment by the gods at the first sacrifice. Both possibilities are conjectural. Possibly the first would be the more possible, and Dirghatamas might be going to ask what precedent the gods laid down at the first sacrifice (stanza 5) to cause the Dawn to conceive and bear the Sun (stanzas 8 ff.).

The identity of the unstructured one (fem.) of the first half of the stanza is indicated by mention of the Earth in the second half.

5. A simpleton, ignorant, I inquire through mental concentration about the footprints which the gods set down then. Over the calf the kavis stretched out seven threads (as the warp of the sacrifice) to weave the woof on them.

Dirghatamas, through the use of mental concentration (*mānasā*), that is introspection or intuition, seeks the nature of the precedent ("footprints") which the gods laid down at the first sacrifice. The gods were the kavis, but they are not specifically identified; perhaps they were the Ādityas (cf. RV 10.72.5-8), as was mentioned in the note to the first stanza, possibly serving as Agni's seven sons or assistants (cf. also stanzas 2 and 3). The hapax legomenon *baṣkāya* is left untranslated. If the calf is the Sun, a guess for *baṣkāya* might be something like "ready to be born." For the warp and woof of the sacrifice see RV 6.9.2, 3.

6. Unknowing, ignorant, I ask for knowledge from the kavis who may have information: What was the One (neut.) who (masc.) in the form of the Unborn (Sun?) propped apart these six regions?

The neuter One seems likely to be the One Real (*ékam sāt*) of stanza 46 below, who is Vāc. For the pāda *ajāsya rūpé kim āpi svid ékam* cf. the statement in RV 10.82.6 about the One (neut.) which was proffered in the navel (place of conception, which is the atmosphere, see stanza 33) of the Unborn (*ajāsya nābhāv ādhy ékam*

ārpitam) and on which all the worlds are set. The identification of the Unborn as the Sun is based upon the following considerations. The Unborn here supports the six regions as it also does in RV 1.67.3, where Agni is said to support them as does the Unborn, and in RV 8.41.10, where Varuṇa is likened to the Unborn for performing the same feat. In stanzas 10 and 14, and probably stanza 2 as well, of our hymn it is clearly the Sun who supports the worlds. It seems likely, therefore, that "the Unborn" is the Sun. The basis of "the Unborn" as an epithet of the Sun may be that in the Indra-Vṛtra myth the birth of the Sun, embryo of the Waters, was necessary for creation and therefore a war aim of the Ādityas in their conflict with the Dānavas (see *JAOS* 62.91, 96 f.). Until the Sun was released it was the Unborn.

The six regions are the three earths and the three heavens (cf. RV 1.35.6; 7.87.5).

7. Let him here (*ihá*) who really knows proclaim where the place of that benign bird (the Sun) was located. From his head the cows (the rays) draw milk; when wearing a covering they drank water with the foot.

The stanza and stanzas 47, 51, and 52 embody Dīrghatamas's theory of rain. Before the Sun rises from the ocean the light rays (of Dawn?) wearing a covering of water (cf. *ápo vāsānāḥ* in stanza 47, where the rays are called "yellow birds") and directed upward toward the sky drink the water with the foot, that is, with their lower end, and as they move upward to the sky take the water with them. After they reach the seat of the *ṛtá*, as stanza 47 puts it, the rays are directed downward toward the earth and take the water with them as rain, here metaphorically called milk because it brings nourishment to the earth. Rays when called "cows" are usually those of the Dawn. Though GrW also ascribes the epithet "cows" to the Sun's rays in three passages (2.14.3; 6.60.2; 7.9.4) it could just as plausibly in all three be ascribed to the Dawn's rays.

8. The mother (of the Sun, i.e. Uṣas), in accord with supreme order, yielded the father (Dyaus) his due, for at the beginning reverently and with concentrated mind she united with him. A reluctant prude, she became pregnant when pierced. Reverent worshippers went to give applause.

For Uṣas as the daughter of Dyaus see RV 1.183.2; 4.30.9; 5.82.5. She is the mother of Sūrya, as appears in our next stanza (cf. RV 7.78.3; 7.80.2). Sūrya is the son of Dyaus (RV 10.37.1; 3.58.1). Uṣas apparently feared incest and was reluctant to yield to her father Dyaus but recognized that she should do so to conform to the *ṛtá*. The situation is similar to that of Yama unwilling to mate with his twin sister in RV 10.10 (see remarks in MVM 172 f.).

9. The mother (Dawn, Uṣas) was yoked to Dak-

ṣiṇā's (Dawn's) chariot pole. The child (Sun) was within the enclosures (?). The calf (Sun) lowed and searched for the many-colored cow (Dawn) in the three stages.

Dawn is metaphorically called a cow and named Dakṣiṇā, "Liberality, priest's Fee" (see M. Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, pp. 64 ff., especially pp. 71-75). She seems to have left her calf as soon as it was born, much as Indra's mother left him (see *JAOS* 62.94).

The meaning of the hapax legomenon *vrjantī* is uncertain: Grassmann thinks it means "cow;" Agrawala says "daughter-cows;" Deussen says "Hürde;" Henry and Whitney "ruses, wiles;" Bloomfield (on AV 7.50.7) "cunning devices." Geldner gives it up. Oldenberg thinks likely it should be connected with *vrjána* (neut.) and that suggestion is questioningly accepted here. "In the three stages" is a conjectural rendering of *triśú yójanēsu* and would refer to earth, atmosphere, and heaven. Or possibly we should connect the three with the 30 yojanas which day and night each traverse in a twenty-four hour period. If so, the sense would be that Dawn precedes the Sun by one-tenth the expanse of the sky from the eastern horizon to the western (see RV 1.123.8).

10. Solitary he has risen, supporting (stabilizing) the three mothers and the three fathers. Never do they weary him. On the top of yonder sky, they say, is Vāc, who knows all but does not enter (enlighten?) all.

For the six regions see stanza 6 above. For the rare word *ávisvaminvam* see note to stanza 3. The poet mentions Vāc here in preparation for denying in stanza 12 that Kāla occupies the upper heaven. She favors only the worthy (RV 10.71.3-9; 10.125.5).

11. Never does the twelve-spoked wheel of the *ṛtá* wear out as it keeps on revolving over the sky. Seven hundred and twenty sons in pairs, O Agni, rest on it.

The wheel is the year; the twelve spokes are the months; the 720 sons in pairs are the days and nights. Cf. stanza 48. Agni is being addressed possibly because the poet is thinking of the sacrificial year.

12. They (some) say the father, five-footed, with twelve aspects, affluent, is in the upper half of the sky; others here say the wide-seeing one (the Sun) is set in motion in the seven-wheeled, six spoked (car) in the lower (half).

Two different views of Time or the Year, which is equivalent to, or controlled by, the Sun. One view is that he is in the upper half of heaven and is therefore supreme. The other view, which is that of the poet, is that the Sun is in only the lower half; the upper half is the abode of Vāc (see stanza 10 and note to stanza

3). The "father" is possibly Time (cf. AV 19.53.4). For the five seasons see VeInd s.v. *ṛtú*. The twelve aspects are the twelve months of RV 10.85.5. For the upper and lower halves of heaven, which are separated by the vault (*nāka*) see MVM p. 8 f. The upper half is a region of perpetual light, the dwelling-place of the gods and the site of Varuṇa's heaven. It is invisible to man, whose sight cannot penetrate the *nāka*. The idea of Time as supreme is elaborated in AV 19.53 and 54.

"Wide-seeing" (*vicakṣaṇā*) is applied elsewhere to the Sun (e.g. RV 1.50.8). The seven wheels are perhaps the six pairs of months and the intercalary month and the six spokes may be the seasons (see VeInd s.v. *ṛtú*).

13. On this five-spoked wheel as it revolves all the worlds have their support. Though heavy-laden its axle does not get heated. Even from yore with its naves (punningly, its aeons) it has not been damaged.

The spokes again would be the seasons, this time, by a variant count, considered to be only five (see VeInd s.v. *ṛtú*).

14. The unaging wheel with its felly has been revolving over the outstretched (Earth?); ten yoked ones draw it. The eye of Sūrya, though covered by darkness, presses on; all the worlds are kept in motion on it.

For *uttānā* "outstretched" taken here as possibly referring to the Earth cf. *uttānāpad* in RV 10.72.3, 4. The ten yoked ones are the Sun's ten horses. The eye of the god Sūrya is the Sun (see GrW s.v. *cākṣus*). The translation of *rājas* by darkness is based upon the phrase *kṛṣṇā rājas* in RV 1.35.2, 4, 9.

15. They say that besides those (twelve months) born in pairs there is a seventh (the intercalary month) born singly. The six sets of twins are known as the god-born *īṣis*. The sacrifices for them (months) are determined by fixed rule; when they (the sacrifices) are altered in respect to arrangement (through introduction of the intercalary month) they waver on their base.

sthātré is taken as loc. of *sthātra* rather than as dat. of *sthātṛ*; see Whitney on AV 9.9.16.

This stanza is generally considered to refer to the twelve months taken in pairs (see VeInd s.v. *ṛtú*) and the intercalary month, which, when inserted, may vary in position among the months and thus interrupt the sequence of sacrificial performances and so pervert the results. In Av 5.6.4 this month is called *sanisrasā* "slippery, sliding." In ŚBr. 12.8.2 the intercalary month is said to be equal to the twelve months. By getting control of it the drinker (of soma at the sacrifice) in the thirteenth month wins all that the drinkers in the twelve months gain. In classical times the intercalary month (*adhikamāsa*) is commonly called "month of

impurity" (*malamāsa*), when no sacrifices should be performed, or it may be called the demon Malimluca. This stanza has led to considerable speculation, even controversy, on the ground that the intercalary month was unknown in the Rig Veda (see VeInd II.162, 412 f.).

16. Feminine they are, yet people tell me they are masculine. He who has eyes may see this; the blind would never understand. The son who is a seer has understood it. He who comprehends it would be his father's father.

The months are feminine in character because productive, but the grammatical gender of the word for month (*māsa*) is masculine and so, too, the names of the months in the Yajur Veda (see VeInd II.161). To be one's father's father is to be wiser than one's father (see Oertel, *Sitzungsberichte d. bayer. Akademie der Wissenschaften*, phil.-histor. Abteilung, 1937, Heft 3, p. 6 of reprint). The reference here must be to Agni, who is also called his father's father (*pitūṣ pitā*) in Rv 6.16.35. In the present context we may recognize that Agni knows the uses of the twelve months and the intercalary month and the way to adapt to the introduction of the latter.

17. Below the upper one (heaven), above the lower one (earth), bringing her calf by the foot, the cow went upward. In what direction, to which half did she go off? Wherever is she giving birth? She is not in the herd.

The mystery of where the Dawn goes to give birth to the Sun, which seems to be below the sky and above the earth (cf. RV 4.52.7). This would be at some place in the atmosphere. She is here called a cow and the Sun a calf. Can the obscure phrase *padā vatsām bibhrati gauḥ* mean "being pregnant"? If so it would have a similar meaning to modern Hindustani *pānw bhārī honā* "to be pregnant" (see Platts, *Urdu, Classical Hindī, English Dictionary*, s.v. *bhārī*, p. 178, and *pānw*, p. 221). Or does the phrase merely mean that the calf was following at her heels? The statement *nahī yūthé antāḥ* should possibly be translated "She is not among the herd (of cows)", the reference being to the light rays as a herd of cows. Or might it merely mean "She is solitary, alone"?

18. Who that here knows its (calf's, Sun's) father below the upper one (heaven) and above the lower one (earth), having himself acquired mystical insight, can here proclaim where the divine mind was brought to birth?

Only one with transcendental insight can answer the question.

19. Those (rites) which lie in the future also lie, they say, in the past; those which lie in the past, they say, also lie in the future. What things, O Soma, you and Indra did, they, as though yoked

to the chariot pole of the atmosphere, continue to draw it.

Affirmation of the effectiveness of both past and future rites if they are identical. By means of them the things, that is the heroic deeds (*kārmāṇi vīryāṇi*), or the celebration of the sacrifice, which Indra and Soma did in the past will be duplicated in the future. The atmosphere (*rājas*) is mentioned here because it was there that Indra, aided by Soma, fought his battle with Vṛtra.

20. Two birds, inseparable companions, embrace the same tree. One of them eats the sweet fruit; the other looks on without eating.

Stanzas 20-23 constitute a parable dealing with the attainment of immortality, which is represented by the sweet fruit of a tree, presumably the tree of knowledge. One bird, symbolizing a human aspirant, eats it, that is, gains immortality. Another only looks without seeing (cf. RV 10.71.4). For an analogous idea about the selectivity Vāc exercises with respect to human beings, see RV 10.71; 10.125.5. This stanza is elaborately and very differently interpreted in later times, starting with the Upaniṣads (Muṇḍaka 3.1.2; Śvetāśvatara 4.6; cf. Katha 3.1).

21. Here, where the birds (priests) in conclave flawlessly laud their portion of immortality, the mighty herdsman of the whole world, the wise one (Agni), has entered me, the simpleton.

Here, as at the chanting of the sacrificial hymns in RV 10.72.1 (*ukthēṣu śasyāmāneṣu*), the speaker of sacred knowledge gets mystical experience while the priests are reciting in perfect unison. This bit of transcendentalism may represent some kind of hypotetic effect produced by the recitation. The priests reciting together are in RV 10.73.11 compared to birds warbling in chorus (*vāyaḥ supraṇḍh . . . ṛṣayaḥ*). The herdsman of the universe is Agni (see RV 1.1.8 et passim).

22. That tree on which the birds that eat the sweet fruit all light and breed—no one eats the sweet fruit at its tip, they say, who does not know the father.

The tree may be considered to be the tree of knowledge. In the context of this hymn its tip would be the upper half of heaven above the *nāka* (see note to stanza 12), which is Vāc's realm (see note to stanza 10); its sweet fruit is immortality (see stanzas 21 and 23). The father, in the eyes of these priests, is Agni (cf. stanza 1, also RV 6.1.5 and elsewhere).

23. Only those attain immortality who know that the *gāyatrī* foot is based upon the *gāyatrī* hymn, or that the *triṣṭubh* foot is constructed from the *triṣṭubh* hymn, or that the *jāgat* foot is based upon the *jāgat* hymn.

Agni, it seems, imparts this instruction for attaining immortality, which is the question raised in stanzas 20-22.

24. With the *gāyatrī* foot one fashions a hymn, with the hymn a chant, with the *triṣṭubh* foot a unit of recitation, with double or quadruple units a recitation. With the (creative) syllable (*akṣaraṇa*) they fashion the seven *vāṇiḥ*.

The seven *vāṇiḥ* seem likely to be the seven tones of the musical gamut, less likely to be the utterances of the seven technical priests officiating at the sacrifice.

25. With the *jāgat* he (Indra?) fixed the stream in the sky. In the *rathantarā* chant he supervised the Sun. Three kindling sticks they say the *gāyatrī* has; therefore it has excelled by its power and might.

The subject to be supplied with the verbs "fixed" (*astabhāyat*) and supervised (*apaśyat*) is Indra (JAOS 62.96) rather than "Weltschöpfer" as Geldner assumes. Cosmogonic speculation seems in the Rig Veda to start with the Indra-Vṛtra myth and continue through other Rigvedic speculative theorizing (cf. JAOS 85.23 ff.). The three kindling sticks of the *gāyatrī* are the three feet of the *gāyatrī* stanza.

26. I invoke that cow (Dawn) easy to milk that the dextrous milker may milk her. May Savitr apply most favorable stimulus for us! The pot is heated. This let me happily announce.

Stanzas 26-30 report a celebration of the pravargya rite, possibly that which the gods celebrated to cause the birth of the Sun and which Dirghatamas saw in his vision. The pravargya rite is celebrated at dawn but the details are uncertain (see KRPV II.332 f.). An earthenware pot is heated and fresh milk is poured into it as it sits over the fire. The milk boils up and runs over on the fire. The rite operates by sympathetic magic to bring the dawn and the sunrise. Dawn, called a cow, is represented by the milk. The ceremony causes the Dawn to emerge from her place of concealment and swell up. Savitr, the divine obstetrician, is besought to render his services. The pot seems to represent the place below the horizon where Dawn is confined. The milk as it overflows on the fire appears to be a symbol of the new-born Sun.

27. The mistress of riches (Dawn), snuffing at her calf (Sun) and seeking it, has come with pious thought. Let this cow give milk for the Aśvins! let her increase for great prosperity.

The milk hissing or humming in the pot symbolizes the Dawn as a cow snuffing at her calf, the Sun. She is to give milk to the Aśvins, who regularly accompany her in her car, and, as is her custom, she is to bring riches

to the world, and especially to the priests (see Bloomfield, loc. cit. in note to stanza 9 above). The aor. *āgāt* may be "prophetic," meaning "may she come."

28. The cow has mooed at her blinking (waking) calf (the Sun); she has snuffed at his head to make him low. Longing for his warm mouth, she lows a lowing; she swells with milk.

The bubbling sound of the boiling milk is the cow's mooing to her freshly born calf. The swelling of the milk over the fire represents the swelling of the milk in her udder.

29. This (pot) with which the cow (milk) is enclosed sings. The cow (milk) set over the spluttering (flame) lows a lowing. With her hissing (punning, pious devotions) she has felled her mortal (enemy). Becoming lightning she has knocked off the covering (the lid of the pot).

The milk in the pot as it swells and gurgles represents the lowing of the cow (Dawn), which, as it were, thus utters a song or sacrificial chant. When the swelling milk pushes off the lid of the pot, for which the word is *vavri*, we have an echo of Indra destroying Vṛtra "the Covering," both words (*vavri* and *vtrā*) being derivatives of *vr*, which root also appears in RV 10.129.1 *kīm āvarivah* "what covered (all)?"

30. In the midst of the (three) homes (of Agni) lies the breathing swift-moving, living, restless enduring One (neut.). The (immortal) life of the dead one (the Sun that died the previous evening) fares according to his constituent nature. The immortal has a common origin with the mortal.

The homes of Agni, mentioned in the gen. *pastyānām* are three (cf. *tripastyā* RV 8.39.8); these are designated as heaven, earth, and the Waters or ocean (cf. MVM 93). The One (neut.) in the midst of Agni's homes is the milk which has boiled over on the fire. This might refer to some neuter word for milk to be supplied, such as *pāyas* or *kṣīrām* or *dugdham* and it could symbolize the *āyus* (also neuter) or life-force of the Sun. The idea would then be a variant of that expressed in RV 10.16.5, where Agni Jātavedas is besought to let the dead man's life-force unite with a new body that accords with his qualities (we might say "with his deserts"). There is verbal parallelism between the wording of our text *jivó mṛtāsya carati svadhābhiḥ* and that of RV 10.16.5 *yās ta āhūtās carati svadhābhiḥ / āyur vāsāna ūpa vetu śéṣaḥ sām gachatām tanvā jātavedaḥ*. The Sun acquired an immortal life-force through receiving a portion of Vāc (stanza 37), but its body is mortal. Hence the hymn can say that, when the new Sun is born, the immortal life-force and the mortal casing of it have a common origin (*sāyonih*).

We may probably assume that at this point the reborn

Sun appears above the horizon in the atmosphere, which is the middle one of Agni's three homes (see on the note above).

31. I have seen the cowherd (Sūrya) who never tires moving along the pathways toward (us) and beyond. Clothing himself in his concentered yet spreading (rays) he keeps rolling on among the worlds.

Part II of the hymn (stanzas 31-42) now starts, adding details to the report given in Part I. The poet alludes to the visions in using *āpaśyam*.

Sūrya is called "cowherd of all that is still and all that moves" (*viśvasya sthātūr jāgataś ca gopāḥ* RV 7.60.2). Our present stanza also occurs in RV 10.177.3; Bloomfield (RVR 151) refuses to decide priority but thinks it likely to rest with RV 1.164.

32. He who made him knows not of him. He who saw him—he is out of that one's sight. Enclosed within the Mother's womb, yet full of progeny, he entered Nirṛti (Destruction).

The stanza seems to refer to the Sun's disappearance when it sets. "He who made him" could be Dyaus as the Sun's father (see stanza 8) and the meaning would be that when the Sun disappears below the western horizon it is no longer visible to Dyaus (the Sky). "He who saw him" would again refer to the Sky (Dyaus). "Enclosed within the Mother's womb" would refer to the notion that the Sun, having set, has returned to Mother Earth's womb (cf. RV 10.18.10), though himself full of progeny, that is, possessing within himself an infinite number of Suns to be born day by day. The Sun of the day immediately at hand, however, dies on entering Nirṛti, the place of Destruction below the earth.

33. The Sky Father (Dyaus) was my progenitor. The navel here was the place of union (for my conception). My mother was this great Earth (*prthivī mahī*). The womb for me was between the two outstretched hemispheres (sky and earth). Here the Father deposited his daughter's (Uṣas') embryo.

Dirghatamas, having seen the Sun die in the two preceding stanzas, is now going to describe the conception of the successor Sun, who is to be born the following morning, but he starts by having the Sun's mother, Dawn, proclaim her parentage, after which he reports on her conception. In making Dyaus her father and Prthivī her mother, this stanza reflects the old Indo-European myth of Father Sky and Mother Earth, with their sons the Dioskouroi and their daughter the Dawn Aurora (cf. *divó . . . duhitā* RV 4.52.1).

34. [Someone asks a ritualistic riddle (*brahmodya*):] I ask you what is the farthest limit of the earth. I ask you where is the navel of the

universe. I ask you the semen of the lusting stallion (Dyaus). I ask you the supreme heaven of Vāc.

The scene is the ceremony attending the Dawn's conception. The purpose of the riddle is to affirm the validity of the ritual being celebrated and the authority of the officiating priests, and at the same time to emphasize the basic importance of Vāc and the need for her presence, or at least the presence of her authority, in the ritual which is being celebrated. Hence the Dawn's mother (Pṛthivī) and the semen of her father (Dyaus), the place of conception (atmosphere), and the supreme source (Vāc) of the ritual employed are ritualistically identified.

35. [The answers to the riddle:] This altar is the farthest limit of the earth. This sacrifice is the navel of the universe. This soma is the semen of the lusting stallion. This Brahman priest is the highest heaven of Vāc.

36. The seven wombs of the cosmic halves (sky and earth), (and) the semen (or the conception), at the command of Vishnu take their position in the wide expanse. With holy prayers and intent mind, wise, they (the wombs), circumambient, surround (the semen) on all sides.

The conception of Dawn as a result of the sacrifice. The seven wombs seem to echo the cosmic Waters or seven streams (*āpaḥ, sapta sindhavaḥ*), which Indra released when he slew Vṛtra. They were jointly pregnant when they were released and gave birth to it, whereupon Indra supported the sky and spread out the earth (see *JAOS* 62.96).

37. [Someone not named but probably the Sun speaks:] I do not know just what This (neut.) is that I am. Concealed (restrained, I range with mind intent. When the firstborn of the *ṛtā* (Agni) approached me, then I got a portion of that Vāc.

For Agni as the firstborn of the *ṛtā* see RV 10.5.7. The neut. *idám* "this" is the One Real (*ékaṃ sāt*) of stanza 46, which is Vāc. The meaning appears to be that Agni enlightens the newborn Sun about the fact that it possesses a part of Vāc, has a function in the cosmos, and is immortal. Since the conception of the Sun was described in stanza 8 of Part I it is not described here in Part II as is the conception of Uṣas (stanzas 33-36), which was not mentioned in Part I.

38. One goes away, one comes, compelled by its inner quality. The immortal has a common origin with the mortal. The two constantly travel opposite each other. When people perceive one, they do not perceive the other.

This stanza is similar to stanza 30 in some of its wording and apparently in general conception as well. Both contain the statement "The immortal has a common origin with the mortal." The present stanza seems to mean that as one body of the Sun dies another is conceived and born, but the life force of the Sun continues without dying since it is immortal. But because the Sun that is newborn appears only after its predecessor died, people do not see both at the same time.

"One goes away, one comes"—a similar statement is made of day and night in RV 1.123.7 (*āpānyād éty abhy ānyād eti viśurūpe āhanī sām carete*).

39. The *akṣára* of the *ṛc*, on which the gods in highest heaven have all taken their seat—what will he who does not know it accomplish by means of the *ṛc*? Just those who know it sit together here.

This stanza may be understood to mean that a hymn (*ṛc*) when employed without the *akṣára* is not effective. But what is the *akṣára*? It seems that here it might be the *sāman*, which must be joined with the *ṛc* to make the recitation potent (cf. Bloomfield in *JAOS* 21.50 f. and the passages he quotes, correcting the inadvertence in citing Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 3.23 as 3.22). Fully trained priests know how to make the combination. For the need to train priests in reciting together see RV 10.71; 10.130; cf. of the frogs likened to priests in RV 7.103.5. Bloomfield regarded Indra's epithet *ṛciśama* as a development from *ṛci-sāma(n)*, being an adaptation of the prosodically unfavored *ṛci-sā* to the customary *ṛci-sā*, and he held it to mean "he for whom the *sāman* is sung upon the *ṛc*." It might perhaps be better to understand *ṛciśama* as "he who (first) chanted the *sāman* upon the *ṛc*." The epithet would then allude to Indra's assumed use of the sacrifice in slaying Vṛtra and achieving his other great deeds (RV 3.32.12) and his association with Bṛhaspati and with the Maruts (for the latter see MVM 80). *Akṣára* may be considered here to mean "(creative) syllable," perhaps even "sound," including phonology, articulation, pronunciation, enunciation, tonality, metrical value, in short, sound in all its aspects, and the use of the syllable in constructing and employing metres (cf. stanza 41). For a recent discussion of *akṣára* see J. A. B. Van Buitenen in *JAOS* 79.176-187.

40. Eating good fodder, may you be prosperous; then let us, too, be prosperous! O inviolable cow (Vāc), eat grass at all times, drink pure water as you graze!

This stanza seems to be addressed to Vāc indicated by the complimentary term "cow"; it is she from whom emanates the *akṣára* just mentioned in the preceding stanza. The present stanza is a prayer, couched in the form of a blessing, for priestly success, and it may be considered to have been uttered by the officiants at the first sacrifice, who were possibly the Ādityas.

41. The buffalo cow (Vāc) lowed, fashioning the tumultuous chaotic floods, having become one-

footed, two-footed, four-footed, eight-footed, nine-footed, she who in highest heaven has a thousand syllables.

Vāc (*gaurī*) as the original author of the universe. The epithet *gaurī* appears as a name of Vāc in Naigh. 1.11 (see Van Buitenen, loc. cit., 178 ff.; cf. Lüders, *Varuṇa* 1.252). "She who has a thousand syllables," that is, has at her command all possible sounds, utilizes syllables in various metric patterns for producing the universe. First, she fashions the tumultuous floods of chaos (*salilāni*); cf. RV 10.129.3, where it is stated that the *salilā* (sg.) was present before organization of a created universe started, but no thought is given there to the origin of the *salilā*. In the Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa 1.1 (quoted by Van Buitenen, op. cit. 179) *ēkapadi* is identified with the syllable *om*, which does not appear in the Vedic Saṃhitās but is first found in the Upaniṣads. Identifications of other metrical terms appearing in our stanza are also noted by Van Buitenen.

The second pāda of this stanza appears in RV 7.41.5, where Bhaga is to be the source of the desired prosperity.

42. From her (Vāc) flow forth the (heavenly) oceans, in consequence of which the four directions exist. From her flows the *akṣāra*; on it this entire (organized) universe has its existence.

The evolution of the ordered universe from Vāc continues. For the position of the directions (*āśāh, pradīśāh*) in the cosmogonic sequence cf. RV 10.72.3, 4. Vāc having made the *akṣāra* available, further developments are left to "the heroes" mentioned in the next stanza when they inaugurate the first sacrifice.

43. From afar I saw the coudung smoke equally above here and below there. The heroes sacrificed the spotted ox. These were the first ordinances.

Part III of the hymn (stanzas 43-47) elaborates on Vāc as the source of the universe. In the vision which Dirghatamas has been describing—or possibly in another vision—he saw (*apaśyam*) the first sacrifice and reports further details. "The heroes" performed the sacrifice in the atmosphere "equally above here (the earth) and below there (heaven)." The spotted ox may be the soma, which is often called *ukṣān* (see s. v. in GrW).

Coudung smoke (*śakamāyaṃ dhūmām*) seems to have been used for forecasting the weather and the AV possessive compound *śakadhūma* is understood by Bloomfield to mean "weather forecaster" (see his remarks in *American Journal of Philology* 7.484 f.; *The Atharva Veda*, p. 81; *Hymns of the Atharva-Veda*, SBE 42.532 f.). Here, we may conjecture, the position of the coudung smoke indicated that weather conditions were the most propitious possible for a sacrifice.

44. The three long-haired ones appear at the appointed time; throughout the year-long course (of the sacrifice) one of them (Agni?) consumes (the offerings), one (Sūrya?) surveys the universe

through his powers, of one (Vāyu?) the onrush is visible but not his form.

"Long-haired one" (*keśin*) is an appropriate epithet of the Sun and is generally so interpreted in RV 10.136.1, 6, 7, where "he supports the fire, the poison, the two realms (heaven and earth; cf. above in this hymn; see note to stanza 6), is all the sky which is to be seen, is here called the light." The three long-haired ones of our stanza could mean "the long-haired one (Sun) and the two others (associated with him)," though possibly all three are thought to have long hair.

Sūrya surveys the universe in RV 7.61.1 (*abhī yō vīśvā bhūvanāni cāṣṭe*). The identification of his two companions seems to be as follows. The one who consumes (*vapate*) would be Agni, to whom it is said in RV 10.142.4 "you shave the earth as a barber does a beard" (*vāpteva śmāśru vapasi prā bhūma*). The third long-haired one is usually taken to be Vāyu. The rare word *dhṛāji*, here translated "onrush," is used only twice elsewhere in RV (10.97.13; 10.142.4), each time with reference to the Wind (Vāyu, Vāta), while the related words *dhṛājas* and *dhṛājimat* are used only of the wind or of something compared to the Wind (see also among the uses of the verb *dhraj*). Agni, Sūrya, and Vāyu are mentioned in a context analogous to that here in ŚBr 9.2.1.21; 14.3.2.24. In the present context we could see Agni as the fire priest, Sūrya as the supervising priest, and Vāyu as the manipulating priest at this, the first sacrifice.

45. Vāc was divided in four parts. These those Brāhmaṇas with insight (and hence immortality) know. Three parts, which are hidden, mortals do not activate; the fourth part they speak.

In RV 10.90.3 one-fourth of Puruṣa is all creatures; three-fourths of him are immortality in heaven. Was it the three *keśins* "long-haired ones" of stanza 44 who in this stanza divided Vāc or was it "the heroes" of stanza 43? In RV 10.90.6-14 it is the gods who divide Puruṣa. In RV 10.125.3 Vāc says it was the gods who divided her. In RV 10.71.3 it was the ṛṣis who divided her. The fourth part of Vāc which mortals speak (that is, know) is, we may assume, the same as that which is below the transverse line of RV 10.129.5.

46. They call it (the One Real) Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni. Then there is the heavenly bird Garutmant (Sun). The inspired priests speak of the One Real (*ēkaṃ sāt*) in many ways. They call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.

The "One Real" is neuter, Vāc is feminine. Assuming that the identification of the two is correct, the inconsistency of gender may be explained by looking upon Vāc here as conceptually midway between such personal creators as Prajāpati (RV 10.121), Viśvakarman (RV 10.81 and 82), and even herself (RV 10.71 and 10.125) and the purely impersonal *tād ēkaṃ* (neut.) of RV 10.129. The first Agni in this stanza is perhaps the

original, celestial Agni, and the second the terrestrial Agni.

47. The yellow birds (light rays), clothed in the Waters, fly up along the dark path to the sky. They have returned from the seat of cosmic order. The earth is moistened with fatness.

This stanza is related to stanzas 7, 51, and 52. All four deal with Dirghatamas's notion of rain; for his theory and the interpretation of this stanza see the note to stanza 7. The interpretation of this stanza in Whitney's translation of its occurrence in AV 6.22 (see HOS 7.296) seems untenable. The word *niyāna* does not seem to mean "down path," as Whitney understands it, but rather "way into" (cf. RV 10.19.4).

48. Twelve are the fellies (parts of the felly); the wheel is single; there are three halves (parts of the nave). Who has comprehended this? On it are set together 360 peglike unwobbling (spokes).

Stanzas 48-52 are not present in the AV version of the hymn and may be a later addition or colophon to the original RV hymn: see above in section "Structure of the Hymn" for a discussion of these stanzas.

With this stanza cf. stanza 11. The wheel is the year; the twelve parts of the felly are the months; the three parts of the nave are the seasons, namely, spring, summer, and autumn (cf. RV 10.90.6). The 360-peglike spokes are the days and nights. The stanza seems to indicate that the first sacrifice lasted for a year (cf. again the sacrifice of Puruṣa in RV 10.90.6).

49. Your inexhaustible breast, Sarasvatī, a source of delight with which you cause all the choicest things to flourish, which grants treasure, bestows wealth, confers good gifts—present that here to be sucked.

Sarasvatī, being the name of an earthly river, is also in RV a stream in the sky and then a goddess deifying it. In AV 5.7.5 she is directly associated with Vāc as Vāc Sarasvatī, and in the Brāhmaṇas she comes to be equated with Vāc (see MVM 86 ff.). In the present passage she may foreshadow the later identification, perhaps referring directly to Vāc and implying that the poet, besides seeking prosperity, is asking her as goddess of eloquence to favor him with that talent.

50. With the sacrifice the gods performed the sacrifice. These were the first ordinances. These powers (arising from the sacrifice) reach to the vault (*nāka*) of heaven, where are the ancient *sādhyāḥ*, the gods.

This stanza occurs also in RV 10.90.16, where Bloomfield (RVR, HOS 20, 151) considers it secondary. There is an implication that the sacrifice of priests today, since it reproduces that first sacrifice, will be correspondingly efficacious. On the *sādhyās* see Coomaraswamy, *A New Approach to the Vedas*, p. 72 f. For *mahimānaḥ* cf. RV 5.69.2, where the word is associated with the three bulls (*vr̥ṣabhāsaḥ*), who are "seed-depositors" (*retodhāḥ*), this last word occurring in RV 10.129.5.

51. The same amount of water ascends and descends with the days (that is, throughout the year). While the rain clouds vivify the earth, the flames (of the sacrifice) vivify the sky.

For the theory of the ascent and decent of the water see note to stanza 7, and cf. also stanzas 47 and 52. The flames of the sacrifice give life to the sky by causing the Sun to rise and the rain clouds to form. The latter vivify the earth by descending to it as rain. The phrase "with the days" seems to mean "throughout the year," the length of time which was probably required for celebration of the sacrifice (see stanza 48). Oldenberg (SBE 46.250) has a different view of this stanza, perhaps because he does not relate it to stanzas 7 and 47.

52. The great heavenly bird (Sun) with beautiful wings, the lovely embryo of the waters and of the plants, which brings delight straight to us with the rains and is full of life-giving moisture—him I invoke for help.

The phrase "the lovely embryo of the waters and of the plants" (*apām gārbham darśatam ōṣadhinām*) is applied to Agni in RV 3.1.13, while similar wording, again in application to Agni, appears in RV 1.70.2(3). For *abhipatāḥ*, here somewhat freely rendered "straight to us," see Geldner's note in his translation (HOS 33, 237); he translates it "stracks." For a discussion of the deity addressed in this stanza, whether Sūrya or Agni, see Bloomfield RVR, HOS 20.151 f.

